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Inside The Lines

A Drama in
five Acts

By
Sam'l S. Anderson

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INSIDE THE LINES

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS



... BY ...

SAMUEL E. ANDERSON



CAMPBELL COUNTY PRINTING COMPANY, NEWPORT, KY.

1900

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Dramatis Personae.

The Prince of Melbourne.

Cavalier Borge.

Duke of Sydney, usurping King.

Hopper, First Sentry.

Cropper, Second Sentry.

Lady Glendowyn.

Lady Catherine.

Duchess of Sydney.

Garner.

Officers, Courtiers, Ladies in Waiting, Attendants, Servants, Pages, etc., etc.

Inside the Lines.

ACT I. Scene I. *A retired balcony with Lady Catherine and a servant.*

Lady Catherine. Have everything made most inviting. I expect the Prince to come to say adieu, for soon he starts upon a journey. Everything seems to be exactly as I wish it. (*Exit servant.*) Now for my decision! The Prince or Cavalier? When the Prince was in the full possession of his birthright it was an easy task to choose, but things have changed since first he came. Then his prospects more than made amends for all the lack of ardor in his wooing. The Duke of Sydney played a cunning game; has tricked him of his inheritance and yet I wish Borge could have but half his chance. Had he my knowledge of the Prince's plans he would. Oh dear! the Prince has grown so cold and distant that to marry him would mean a wasting, chilling life, continually hovering near the fire to keep the blood from freezing. With Borge, how different! Borge, thy star is in the ascendant!

Enter Servant.

Servant. The Cavalier Borge wishes to speak to your ladyship.

Lady C. Borge! If the Prince should come, make some excuse to keep him out of sight until Borge has

gone. Tell Borge that I await him here. *Exit Servant.*

Enter Borge.

Welcome Borge! Your coming nicks with my desires. It is seldom those we wish for are so prompt; besides your visit bears the pass-port to a woman's favor, it is unexpected; quite.

Borge. Your welcome, Catherine, is very pleasing: it bids me hope for something more. You know a drowning sailor grasps at straws while striving with all his might to carry his shouts to those whose help he seeks before they pass beyond recall. So from the depths of his loneliness man calls to women. My love came upon me with a suddenness and a power just as the sun in the summer solstice, breaking from behind a cloud, mercilessly beats down upon the traveller, leaving him irresolute and bereft of power to act. His eddying brain whirls round and round as leaves when stirred by autumn winds and is a prey for every fancied ill. In agony I passed from chill to fever, then again to chill, as marshalling the hostile columns of my hopes and fears I watched them struggle on. A portion of my time I pass in bliss as hope soars high and then I sink into the depths of torment as my fears prevail. My love drives me ever onward, but the splendors of your beauty and your virtues dazzle and all but overcome me. My home is far away; there beneath a sunny sky, the lemon and magnolia, the jasmine, orange and rose exhale their sweetest perfumes, revelling in the thought of having you for mistress. Catherine, I almost fear to hope.

Lady C. Catherine bids you have no fear. Your love has long been known to me; I felt the archer drawing his bow before the arrow sought its mark. Is

this the bold and reckless Cavalier Borge?

Borge. Life contains no sweeter bliss than the love of a worthy woman. My dearest Catherine!

Lady C. We waste our precious moments in idle dalliance. I fear the Prince. He offered me his hand and I, because of love for you, rejected him. We must be rid of him to share our love in peace. In these disordered times might makes right and private vengeance mocks the forms of law. Now is the time for you to wrest his power from him.

Borge. A soldier scorns a traitor, but for you I would risk all. I have encamped with his forces a hundred men who swear allegiance to my cause, an ample number for our purpose. He may be led into some quarrel that would justify his death. My troop will back me to a man. In the confusion I will have a good chance to grasp the power he holds. Enough! The die is cast and by no coward hand! No barrier short of death will keep me back.

Lady C. By measure of the hazard shall I know the breadth and depth of your regard for me.

Borge. Quick work I'll make of this, and then I come to claim your hand.

Lady C. Wait! I have a better plan than that. Allegiance to my Prince is dear to me, but far dearer the lover I have found in you. This is my sole excuse for this treachery to him. His frowns and sullen looks give ample evidence of jealousy. He hates all those who even gaze me; much more the rival for the hand he seeks. I have no doubt that he would do you harm, in secret, underhanded ways, but we can overreach him there. I have a secret that will make you safe against all his power. He has conceived a

plan to take his brother from the hands of those who keep him prisoner. To accomplish this he will journey to the castle in disguise ; liberate his brother, carrying him thence to his own camp, and this within the week. A letter will inform you of the very hour. Therefore see that the Duke has knowledge of this plan. His hatred for the Prince will leave no way untried to end his life.

Borge. All this shall be done exactly in accord with your desires. For care of those she loves commend me to a woman.

Lady C. Adieu ! Borge. You wear my colors in this fight.

Borge. Adieu ! *Exit Borge.*

Lady C. It is not without regret that I see him risk his life but one must die. A lover, such as either, should he be disappointed and allowed to live might make some thrust I could not parry. Here's luck to him who wins. With all my heart I hope it is Borge, I like him well. *Exit Lady Catherine.*

ACT I. Scene 2. *Three days later. Soldiers gathering around a camp-fire at night. Officers and men arriving at intervals.*

First Officer. We are in luck ! In these discordant times to breakfast, fight and sup together is a sure token of fortune's favor. Of late the fickle jade seemed flirting with the Duke and to furnish him with every means to injure us.

Sec. Off. That's true. He seemed to hold the cards and deal each one when it would harm us most. Our Prince was absent when he came, and we, like fools, although he was unknown to most of us, in fact to all

the younger ones, placed him in charge of all our stores ; thinking as he was kinsman to the King he must be loyal to his cause ; then our King is suddenly taken ill and this furnished him excuse to claim he died a natural death. Our unsuspecting friends were trapped as they came in. It seemed that he must crush us in the fight.

First Off. But fortune now is leaning to our side. You must acknowledge that young Garner came just in the nick of time. He seemed to bring good luck.

Sec. Off. He came as if he had fallen from the sky, but if he was the devil I would claim him for my friend.

First Off. To-night we must lay our plans to take advantage of our luck and hasten the completion of our purpose.

Sec. Off. Leave to-morrow's care until to-morrow. Let us consecrate this night to merriment ; to-morrow we may be dead. Upon the skirmish line to-day we found a hag, a prophesying hag ; she could not be a hag unless she prophesied. She drew our horoscope and listed there the sequence of our lives and then told of future deeds. She assigned to me promotion and success in my endeavors. In some mysterious way these people seem to lift at least the corner of the veil and see into the future. But to Garner she told a quaint and curious prophecy of love that put that young gallant quite to rout. She told of how he hid his love and was deceiving us. His blushes furnished merriment ; we chaffed him until he fled , no doubt to seek the happy wench.

Third Off. We must have this story from his own lips to-night.

Sec. Off. We shall have rarest sport with him. He is so very shy and thinks these matters are quite serious.

First Off. That youth bears no stamp of camp carousal and you should spare him these rude jests. Rather let us counsel among ourselves how we may lay a snare to take the Duke.

Third Off. I am growing tired of plans. Discuss them with some old man, one grown so old he takes no more enjoyment from life's good things: this is the season marked for gayety. Here comes Borge. If you are lucky he may deign to yawn while you explain your plans to him. He lately seeks no company and therefore may be well pleased with yours.

Enter Borge.

Go join Borge. To-night we laugh at love.

Borge. At whose love?

Third Off. At yours, if ever we thought you had a serious one.

Borge. I am in no humor to be insulted, so choose your words with care.

Third Off. Of late you have grown far too sullen for your own good. Your lacks of courtesy will make you no friends.

Borge. I meant no offense. I am a friend to every person here and I wish to have all friendly to me.

Sec. Off. That is much better. Come, join our company. We promise you some rare sport to-night. Those who dance at love's shrine must pay the fiddler.

Borge. What means this continual talk of love?

Enter Prince.

Prince. Where is Garner?

Sec. Off. Oh, young Garner has a sweetheart, you will find him there. She is his first, it is said.

Prince. He is so gentle I should think the lady had the sweetheart.

Sec. Off. Here he comes. The girl! The girl!

Garner. What a charge to put on me!

Third Off. It's guilt. It's guilt. Look! see the change of color. The crimson mounts into his very hair.

Sec. Off. You had your fortune told to-day and we are all waiting to hear that story.

Garner. That was a grewsome jest.

Sec. Off. Ha! Ha! a jest. I'll wager that it will all come true within the month.

Garner. I do not think much of such a story.

Sec. Off. Come, turn about and show your blushes while yet you may. Such fine youths as you were made for love, and even the stupid laggard hastes to taste such joys. A soldier is soon tutored in these things nor needs a prompter long. We are not quit of youth before we have our surfeit, either with some dainty virgin or some cat.

Garner. A pity it is you were not bred with sense of that refinement that feels the insult of a smutty jest. I have not suffered this before and shall not now.

Prince. This is no time for anger. Come, I'll be a partner in your guilt, an accessory before the crime. You must introduce me to the girl and should it prove as serious as you take it now I'll see she has a dowry worthy you. A kiss too, if you will, in remembrance

of her gallant. But I suspect that you will soon refute these slanders on your modesty.

Borge. Shame ! Shame ! to tease this boy at such a rate. It is cowardly to choose the least of all on whom to vent your petty spite.

Prince. I should like to know the lady who wastes her love on you.

Borge. You shall. It is the Lady Catherine.

Prince. Base, braggart knave, you lie. (*Borge draws his sword and makes a thrust which is parried by the Prince. Borge is siezed by those about.*) You thought to take me unprepared.

Third Off. Your vicious temper will bring down upon your head well-merited punishment. My fingers have a long time itched to grasp your throat and choke the venom out of you.

Prince. Your proud and insolent behavior has grown past all endurance and must have a check. These acts must end. Take this man out. Put him in your tent and keep him under guard until my further orders.

Borge. A valiant leader who bids others settle his private quarrels rather than meet his foe ! You dare not face me in a single combat, even here, with your friends about to lend you aid and comfort. A cur who shifts his quarrels upon subordinates is beneath contempt.

Prince. Old offenders hurl their curses at the judge, inviting him to quit his caste and bandy words with them. Your offense is a most serious one and the only proper course is to try you by court-martial. There you will have an opportunity to justify your conduct.

Borge. Your answer is most discreet. At least it will keep your precious life from danger at my hands.

Prince. (*To Second Officer.*) Obey my orders. I have enough of this. *Exit Second Officer, Soldiers, Borge and all officers except first.* To-morrow I start upon a journey, but upon the fifth day from this summon a court-martial to try Borge.

Garner. If it is not a secret whither do you go?

Prince. I expect to go inside the lines and castle of the Duke.

Garner. Go inside the castle of the Duke! It is madness! Your imagination surely pictures all the perils without suggestion on our part. It could mean nothing less than instant death. What purpose can you have in this mad trip?

Prince. My mother on her deathbed consigned to me the care and custody of my young brother, most solemnly requesting a strict observance of the obligations she then imposed. Lovingly I undertook the charge. I reared him from his early infancy and he became endeared to me by every tie of love and tenderness; then the Duke's unnatural acts deprived me of the sunshine of his smile. That delicate boy may be exposed to disease in some vile dungeon or be suffering insults that would break his mother's heart could she know of them. She would then remember my promise. Therefore I have resolved to go to the Duke's castle to seek some way by which my brother may be rescued.

Garner. And I am resolved to go with you.

Prince. That would be madness. There is no reason whatsoever for your resolution.

Garner. That is the same thing I told you.

Prince. But for you there is no call to this duty.

Garner. A hard, cold thing is duty, especially if it lacks our sympathy. It is a duty to keep our plighted faith but more to plight it. A sense of duty could not prevail upon me to volunteer assistance in your private cause. My feeling is a deeper one, partaking of the qualities of friendship. Friendship is an idol to which we may bow with honor and respect and arising, we are chastened, acquit of selfish thoughts and ennobled by our love.

Prince. The laws of friendship have peculiar beauty, overrating all our virtues and condoning part of every fault, bidding us share our pains and toils, but they forbid that I accept a sacrifice like this.

Garner. When all is said, I go.

Prince. To Garner ever falls the tasks imposed by love. I share your company with reluctance for the world would never furnish such another, so loyal, true and brave.

ACT I. Scene 3. *Same night. The camp at night. Borge is discovered cautiously creeping from beneath a tent. Soldiers passing at intervals.*

Borge. Five, six. There are too many in that crowd, I purpose not to put my plan within so many mouths. I'll wait to seize an occasion more favorable. (*Sentry passes.*) That sentry startled me, I forgot that I am a prisoner here. He is a damned villian who would enjoy sticking me with his lance. Fortunately with their drink and games they keep a careless watch, but for the future I will be more discreet. Here comes

one of my own command. Hist ! Hist ! To what troop do you belong ?

Soldier. I serve that gallant soldier, the Cavalier Borge. What ! My Lord ! Who bound and tied you like a felon ! I will loose you in a moment.

Borge. No. No. It is no doubt a pleasing sight to see your leader thus bound, to hear the curses that he spends in rage and know that those may scoff at him who quailed before his flashing eye. His gallant plume, no longer at the front, lies grovelling in the dust, a mockery to those for whom it blazoned victory. His men, abandoning the glorious memories of the past, will blush to tell they served in his troop ; a sad commentary on their courage and fidelity. With hanging head and downcast eye they must deny their leader, ashamed to own the banner under which they fought. When they return home they will meet the cold disdain due cowardice or treason.

Soldier. I will untie you and avenge this insult to our troop.

Borge. Stay ! It was by the Prince's order I was so bound. He would visit the full measure of his wrath upon the head of him who cuts a single strand. But you may render me a better service by carrying a simple package. No, I will not ask it. The sacrifice would be too great, for if you fail it would mean to die on foreign strands, unknown, unmarked by stone or grassy mound, unwept by friend or brother. The task is far too dangerous.

Soldier. The Cavalier Borge indeed underrates the fealty of all his troop if he thinks there is a single coward in our midst. At your request I stand prepared to give my life, yes, everything.

Borge. Well said and like a soldier of Borge. Hasten with this packet to the Duke. See that it falls into no other hands on peril of you life and mine. Do this well ; you are my trusted friend and confidant. Fare thee well, adieu !

ACT II. Scene 1. *The following day. Two sentries on guard at the Duke's lines on the edge of the Forest of Melbourne.*

First Sentry. I say I understand the creatures, don't tell me that I don't. All women do be most queer with ways that are far beyant the ken of men and farther still beyant their own. It's cause and cause ; and if you ask them for a reason not a reason do you get. If you insist on one, tears and tears and floods of tears, enough to drown a trout, come gushing out amid the thunderings of her broken heart. Did you ever know a woman that wasn't built contrariwise to man? Alack a day ! Alack a day ! If we never had a woman our days would all be free from care and jars and the race would live in peace. They are a necessary evil, I suppose, and meekly I have borne every ill they put upon me. I let them always have their own way and then they twit me with my lack of courage, and if I fought them they would call me a great, big brute. But I don't care for all this show ; I am so wise they think no wonder is past me and so I keep them scared.

Second Sentry. They dote on brave men too. That's why I came into the army, so my rank will show my courage and frighten my sweetheart most to death. I tell you she's a dainty, husky creature, enough to pull a three-ton load or drive a man to pity. When

first I seen her frail form my heart went pitipat, pitipat, bump, bump, bump, like the old gray mare as she trots down the road to pasture. She sings like a hawk, she goes so high, and her color's like the Maidenblush, the ones on top the barrel : her eyes are shiny as Bill Dobson's coat, the tattered one, and are chestnut brown. And her hands ; you should see her hands, such a purty red ! I will marry her when we have slain the Prince and placed the vile pretender on his rightful throne.

First Sen. Until you have her tied don't be too sure. These women often balk and he laughs least who laughs too loud. When are we to hear a denouncement of your marriage ?

Sec. Sen. As soon as she will fix the day.

First Sen. When does she say that it is to be ?

Sec. Sen. My eyes have not been blessed with sight of her since May-day dance. That's where I first met her, and then she squeezed my hand so hard her heart must have been in it or moving there upon her sleeve. She said she loved a soldier lad, that's me. I'll tell you she's a great, big plum.

First Sen. You were not a soldier then.

Sec. Sen. Well no, I hadn't jined them then. Well, she may be gone but if she is, a great, big, brave, swishing, swashing, slashing soldier lad like me could easy get another. (*Struts up and down brandishing an old flint-lock.*) What's yonder in the woods ? I believe it's ghosts, or maybe enemies of the King. Let's go report at once. (*Drops gun.*)

First Sen. I believe you're right. The officer should know this thing at once. Ha ! Ha ! They are

not soldiers. You are an erring coward, fleeing at the sight of danger and leaving me alone to fight them all. That was desertion and I'll get promoted by informing on you.

Sec. Sen. That wasn't no desertion. I was going to the guard for help to take them prisoners. Egad, we might do so alone, they don't carry no arms.

First Sen. Now you're talking! Trust an old man for wisdom and for finding a way to do things. Fish be not brought to the table with hook and haste alone. Now we must think twice as fast as Peddler Miller when he sells a shawl, and must know even more than him. But you bet we'll get them yet.

Sec. Sen. That's right. Hurrah! And now I say we bring these spies before the King and tell him how, at the first glimmer of the rising dawn, in a fog so dense we risked our lives, we saw away off there two robber spies. I wrapped my mortal cloak around me and hailed them in a voice that shook the hills and made them tremble in their boots.

First Sen. His imminence would praise our courage and bestow some presents on us and give us an office.

Sec. Sen. He's all right. He would cover me with gold and rich comparison. My uniform would be made of nothing but gold and spangles, gold spangles, and all the braid would be gold braid. My plumes would be longer than anybody's, three in length, each pieced upon the other and with a gold tip on the top of each. My boots would be of ermine skin, my horse a dun, and when the band begins to play and I ride down, with the freezing pomp of altered circumstances I'll hand my horse to you and you can walk him up and

down. Nobody shall never say that I forgot my friends.

First Sen. Nobody ever flew as high as you. You run too fast and will stumble before you go a great ways. Only a crazy fool like you would dare to leave me out in the cold like that.

Sec. Sen. It won't do you any good to sneer at me. I'll maul your head for you, you sneaking hound. (*Each carefully lays down his gun and prepares to fight.*)

First Sen. Now come on and I will kill you where you stand.

Enter Prince and Garner.

Sec. Sen. Here they are ! Hey ! Hey ! You can't go through there, you're prisoners.

Prince. By what authority do you make question of my right to pass ?

Sec. Sen. We are King's men and he won't let you. He forbids it.

Prince. The Duke forbids it ! Well, when did the Duke, that base usurper of our rights, that cuckoo, that murderer, assume to issue orders in this realm or forbid a passage to any loyal subject ? These arms you have neglected and disowned shall find a foster parent, one who will teach them their duty to all traitors and first to you.

First Sen. Don't point that gun this way, it's loaded. I could not help it. He told us we had to do it.

Garner. It seems to me that our journey will be short if you continue thus. Curb your impetuosity. We must await, and patiently, for the guard to be

relieved. So lay aside your haughty mien and let us have a talk with these new friends.

First Sen. It isn't right for you to want to hurt us. It wasn't our fault. The King expressed us and we had to come. Would you mind to put away that gun? We are both peaceful men and wouldn't want to hurt nobody. Please put it down! We love our homes and quite a pretty penny would I give to be there now, although my wife's at home herself.

Prince. It is in stress of adverse circumstances that we prize the protection of a petticoat. Your courage is most rare, sublime!

First Sen. If you knew my wife you'd know I had a lot of courage to wish to be at home. These army doings though are not to my liking. My bent is for a little learning and to try to find out the things that we don't know.

Garner. "A strange world we live in, you and I," none know whence we came and few care why; but fortune has been very kind and now we have met with one who cares to find the why. As a philosopher you doubtless could expound the due relations of the universe, the essence of theology, theosophy, cosmogony, the ethics of the laws prescribed by termagants, and do all this with a sweep of mind commensurate to the task involved.

Prince. By all the signs of occultism we are to have another fortune telling bout

Garner. Don't draw the saber of your rusty wit unless you have surpassing skill to use it. Forgive me for that rebuke.

First Sen. And won't you please to put away that gun?

Prince. You shall have no further cause to complain of the rudeness of your prisoners. For the pleasure of your company I will put it here where it will cause you no more worry. Are you now at ease?

First Sen. A ten-ton load is taken from my mind.

Sec. Sec. Ooch! But I was scared! But I was scared!

First Sen. And since we are friends why don't you tell us where you are going?

Garner. Sometimes young men are sent to see the world before they choose a wife. It is a task requiring greatest thought, one worthy of your skill; so, before that choice is made pray tell us the signs and indications that should guide us in selection.

Prince. Oh! Anything to while away the time and keep impatience within bounds.

First Sen. I just told Cropper there I knew a woman's ways and now I'll learn you how to choose. Blind not your eye to those plain signs that show the bent of mind: shun the marks of hasty temper or one who always scolds. The constant nagging of a virtuous wife may make more hell than twenty evil deeds. Pay no attention to her gew-gaw airs, for these wear off and only leave her worse when they are gone. Don't choose a balky woman; see that her eye is gentle, neither large nor small, and clear, with a wide forehead, good feet, strong hands and arms, straight legs, large bones, smooth coat, for the coat, more than anything else, shows what she spends on clothes.

Prince. That cannot be the Duke who is coming with the guard.

Sec. Sen. Heighho ! Heighho ! And now we leave,
for yonder comes the guard.

First Sen. You must be from foreign parts, here he
makes us call him King.

Enter Guard.

Officer. Whom have you here ?

First Sen. This morning we have shown more valor
than Cannibal in his march on Italy, and we have taken
more prisoners than the greatest Benedict ever took.

Prince. You see that they have not only taken
prisoners but all their arms as well. (*Exhibits sentries'*
arms.)

Officer. What charge have you against these men !

Sec. Sen. Why tuppence each.

Officer. Clear out, you clacking tongue.

Prince. We wish to see the King for we have news
to tell him about his daughter.

Officer. His majesty is much worried about her and
will receive you most graciously. We go direct from
here into the castle. Come with me. *Exeunt all ex-*
cept two new sentries.

ACT II. Scene 2. *Same morning. Reception room*
of the castle with the royal party and attendants. Enter
the officer of the guard with the Prince.

Officer. May it please your majesty, to-day we took
two prisoners at the front. The one I have detained
in the adjoining room, the other I have here, as he
claims to bring some news of your daughter.

King. Bid him step forward. (*The Prince ad-*

vances.) It is our pleasure to hear at once this news. Our royal honor is held in pledge to reward you most liberally, provided that our daughter lives and is unharmed. If it is otherwise, beware !

Prince. The messenger should not be held to make amends for evil tidings should he chance to bear them. You would receive no benefit should pity falsely prompt me to relate but part my tale. We were engaged upon our private business, by chance we have heard news of your daughter and sought to favor you by telling it. It is not the most pleasant and since you seemed inclined to hold us responsible for it I must insist that we have assurance of safe conduct on our way before I tell it.

King. No trifling here ; your news, quickly.

Prince. I asked a pledge for our safe conduct. Answer, will you give it to me ?

King. It will be best for you to speak and instantly.

Prince. It may be wise for you to waste no time in idle threats. Do you think that you will frighten me with this display of anger ?

King. Your insolence passes my endurance. Ho ! Guards, secure this man within a dungeon and give his hot head a little time to cool.

Prince. Go elsewhere then to seek the information I would have furnished.

Queen. Do not be so hasty. Let him tell his story.

King. I may have been a trifle hasty. I will listen to your story.

Prince. First grant my request.

King. By all the honor of a King I pledge myself to see you safe beyond my lines.

Prince. Both myself and my companion ?

King. Yes.

Prince. The message that I bring comes from the Prince direct. He bid me say your daughter is a prisoner in his hands and ill. The King was not aware that she was ill when he refused the Prince's offer of exchange.

Queen. The King refused the Prince's offer of exchange? My daughter a prisoner in his hands and ill!

Prince. Yes your majesty, so he bid me say. By the fortunes of war she fell into his hands and now she feels the want of the attention of her servants and is distressed that she no longer has her mother's care. They keep her very closely confined and she shows some paleness as a result of it. Her cough is slight, not such as should cause you much worry, but proper treatment can be ill supplied by such rude men as have charge of her. The Prince wishes to make an immediate exchange of prisoners, your daughter for his brother.

Queen. Most joyfully we accede to his request.

King. At least you might have asked permission to accept this offer.

Queen. Ask permission for me to have my child again ?

King. The Prince has made this offer once before, but there is no fairness in this proposed exchange. My prisoner is an heir to this, my throne. The Prince of Melbourne claims it. This boy is heir to him and

when these two are dead I draw my title clear from fountain head. This infant child, should his brother chance to die, could not long survive the care I would bestow on him. Then I am King without the shadow of a doubt. Besides we hold a threat above his head.

Queen. Can you hesitate to free our child on terms so fair?

King. To dicker thus with an enemy is sacrifice of honor and weakens our cause with all who hear of it. Tell him that we will not make this exchange.

Queen. You surely cannot mean this! It is but a jest! Think what you are doing! Our daughter, yours and mine. You dare not sacrifice a mother's love to plant instead the seeds of hate.

Prince. Surely the King but jests. There is not living now beneath the sun a single beast who will not aid its young in time of peril.

Enter Officer.

Officer. Your majesty, a messenger awaits without who urgently desires to deliver a packet to the king, refusing absolutely to entrust his charge to any other person.

King. Search him carefully before you bring him into our presence. Assassins lurk about me here, awaiting only opportunity to cut me down. When you are certain that he can do no harm you may show him in.

Exit Officer. Now my good sir, I think I have had quite enough of impudence from you. Your conduct shows that you are some vagabond who needs the lash and you will feel it very shortly.

Prince. But you have promised, on your honor, that we should have safe conduct beyond your lines.

King. I told you if you did not bring good news, beware.

Enter Officer and Messenger.

Mess. Borge sent this packet to your majesty, charging me to let it come into no other hands on peril of his life and mine.

King. The packet, let me have it. *Reads.* See that each avenue of escape is closed! Make fast each gate and door! The tiger's ventured forth from his lair to whet his thirst for blood. Ha! Ha! But he will meet a warm reception. The message says that he is now inside our lines, coming to the castle. He should be here before this time. It must be he awaiting in the ante-room. Bring him forth to answer my questions. *Exit Officer. Re-enter, bringing Garner.* I have just received a message telling me the Prince of Melbourne left his camp last night to come inside my lines. He has turned spy and shall meet the punishment of such. I have good reason to believe that you are the Prince of Melbourne.

Garner. I have always thought that it was a disgrace to deny myself in order to escape a threatened danger. My name is an honored one nor shall I be the first to put a stain upon it. The Prince of Melbourne will meet his doom fearlessly, glorying in the fact that he has been loyal and true to those he loved. I ask a single favor, allow my friend to take the news back to my men.

Prince. The halting gait of feigned excuse would soon betray me if I were so base as to attempt its use. Your purpose is sublime but it is vain. It would be a stain I could not wipe away should I suffer you to

complete your purpose. Besides the King has pledged his royal word that we go free. He would not care to hold his honor quite so cheap.

King. I hold my honor priceless but it was pledged only on condition that you brought good news. Besides you are my enemy and are now completely within my power. Oh no !

Garner. Honor is a jewel you must own to know its value.

King. I'll make short work of this. Commit them both to a dungeon, making them securely fast with irons. At midnight you will execute them both. Then I shall get the Prince and the pretender too.

Prince. I am the Prince of Melbourne and with all humility I ask this boon. Grant a reprieve to this young man who wished to give his life that he might save mine.

King. If that would give you pleasure he should not live, although he had a thousand lives. Take them out.

Prince. Not one of you shall lay your hands upon me. Your coward master cringes beneath my glance, although I am his prisoner. Your people see the depth of perfidy to which you sink, know how little you may be trusted and feel contempt for you, knowing as they do the stinking foulness of your soul. I make demand for instant freedom of this lad. If it is not granted I wreak a vengeance never dreamed by you. Before I left my camp I took care to make secure what little hold we have on you. Your daughter is now within my power, by orders under seal the warden there will execute your child ere midnight Thursday unless they

are revoked. At that dread hour she will feel the cruel cord begin to gripe, her eyes will begin to start, her breath to burst her lungs, her swollen tongue protrude, ceaselessly striving to articulate her unnumbered woes, each tense and rigid muscle enter protest against life's departure : then she quits the struggle, the purpled face takes on a ghastly hue, the spasms and twitchings then subside : she is cold in death. All these you can save her from but only on condition that you give this boy his freedom. I offer to revoke these orders for this young life.

Queen. This is too horrid and too harsh to bear ! Take everything but give me back my child. Fling wide the doors and send this boy with flying speed to snatch her from this cruel death. Parchment ! Parchment ! Bring us parchment that he may write his orders. *Exit Servant for parchment.*

King. What pledge have I that you are not planning treachery and when this boy is free will not hold my child and add demand for other things ? I'll keep him here until you bring the child and then I'll set him free.

Prince. Never. I propose to take no chance on the faith of my promise made by you. *Re-enter Servant with parchment.*

Queen. The parchment's here. Your orders, write them down.

Garner. Would you have me value life so highly as to leave you now ?

Prince. You must leave me. Otherwise this young girl's life goes out and yours is lost without a purpose.

Queen. Quickly ! Quickly ! Write your orders.

King. I am growing very tired of all this fuss and bluster. Take these men out and see that my orders are obeyed.

Queen. Stay one moment. You must see that our men follow us sullenly. We are handicapped with broken promises. This trial of cruelty is far too long and should admonish us to add no new offense. It would be better to agree to take his offer.

King. So I shall. So I shall. My anger got the better of my judgment but now I see that you are right. I will agree to accept you offer.

Prince. Some cunning impulse has prevailed to change your mind. However, I shall do my part. The parchment. Give it to me. *Prince writes and seals it.*

King. Hand me the order. (*Takes it.*) Wise Prince ! Erudite Prince ! Enlightened Prince ! Most learned man. To trap this wise Ulysses is indeed a feat that I shall boast of to my dying day. Had you been acute you would have known that nothing could prevail with me to spare your friend: that he was friend to you was quite enough to sign his death-warrant.

Prince. Your silly twaddle amuses me, it would please me, if it were not so base.

King. It is very strange that you do not like my wit. To-morrow you shall taste my medicine and perhaps you will like that better. At present this warrant is all that I desire from you. Have horse and men to go at once to bring my child. *Exit attendants.*

Prince. It might save some trouble if you but take the time to read the warrant.

King. (*Reading.*) To our honored warden, greeting: These presents are your warrant only when countersigned by Garner in your presence—only when countersigned by Garner in your presence

Garner. Hurrah! The King is balked in his design.

Prince. (*Aside.*) Together let us seize an opportunity to force our way out. I'll give the cue.

King. This is the basest of treachery and positive proof that you keep no faith.

Prince. I have another reason to present why you should stay the execution of your judgment. A few words will suffice. We are about to pass down this long hall, at the further end of which we may see the blessed light for the last time. As we go forth these men will move to give us room. Their ready knives hang listlessly at their side. Together! we are off!

King. Help me! Help me! Keep them away from me for they are desperate and would do me harm. Stop them! Hoist the drawbridge! Close the gates! Lock the door! Bring me my arms. Let's follow them. *Exeunt all.*

ACT III. Scene 1. *Evening of same day. The dining-room of the palace. King and Queen, courtiers and ladies in waiting.*

Queen. My Lord, this is the anniversary of our wedding day, and I have ordered a supper prepared in remembrance of that happy time. Be seated. Our faithful friends will all unite to wish us joy and continued happiness. We drink to the health of our most gracious King.

All. Your majesty's health and joy!

Courtier. As those from the orient say, "May your shadow never grow less."

King. Now I'll quaff another bowl to that same shadow. Shadow we drink to you. Now we will drink to the shadow of each of us.

Queen. Do not drink too much of this strong wine.

King. I'll drink what wine I wish or know the reason why.

Lady Glendowyn. It is the custom, your highness, on occasions such as this to grant some favor as a token of thanksgiving. I should like to ask for one to-night.

King. On you I willingly would bestow any favor that you might ask, or take it, even before it is asked.

Lady G. I must ask and then I fear I shall ask too much.

King. Never fear for that. My board is far too great to fear depletion.

Lady G. The favor that I ask will not deplete your board. When I make bold to ask for favors they are not such as I may buy. It is for love's sake alone I come, to save from your anger one whose nobility has won my favor.

First Courtier. The King is far too gallant to refuse a boon like that.

Second Lady. There is no doubt of that. Come, friends, another toast to the gallant King.

King. Here is to the health and joy of those who please us; to sparkling wit and gracious beauty. Let

me know your lover's name and I will order his release.

Lady G. The archer Cupid shoots his darts from nooks we least suspect. To-day his shaft struck me, and ever since I pine for love. To-day there came here two strangers, the one so young, so handsome, gallant, courteous, true; a faithful friend that could not but make a faithful husband, and as I looked at him soft glances shot from eye to eye, and then I knew I loved.

King. I shall gladly give him welcome here. Let me know his name and I shall send for him.

Lady G. He has offended you most grievously, but I know his heart is true and that he meant no real offense. I will answer for his future conduct. And now, your majesty, will you send your men to release young Garner?

King. Everywhere I hear that name. Release him? I could not think of it. He has insulted me before the court and is the dearest friend the Prince of Melbourne has. Ask me anything, but not that.

Sec. Cour. The King would not refuse to keep a promise that he made the Lady Glendowyn.

King. I never promised to pardon Garner. You knew my feelings upon that subject before you asked.

Sec. Cour. It is the Lady Glendowyn who has asked. I know you hold her in the very highest favor and we plead with her.

King. If the Lady Glendowyn will make another choice I will gladly aid her with all my wealth and all my power.

Lady G. A lady's love should not be hawked about nor sold to highest bidder.

Sec. Lady. For the love we bear the Lady Glendownyn we all unite to ask you to grant this favor to her lover.

Ail. Yes, we beg it of you.

Sec. Cour. To be the husband of the Lady Glendownyn is sufficient guarantee that there will be no treason. Too long she has followed all our fortunes to doubt of this.

King. I had rather that she had asked me for my right hand. It is true I owe her something, but she knew my feelings in this matter before she asked and so she can blame nobody but herself.

Lady G. Your majesty condemns me to a cheerless life.

Sec. Cour. We urge you to do this act of kindness.

King. If I granted him a pardon it would only set a prize for acts of the boldest treason. I cannot do it.

Queen. I come to aid the Lady Glendownyn. Have you forgot, my love, that this is anniversary of the day, when holding fast my hand, you vowed to love and cherish me, for better or for worse, forever and forever. Have you so soon forgot those happy, happy days, when life was all a dream; when first our daughter came, illuming all our home with her sweet light? You loved that daughter then, would carry her in your strong arms for hours and hours together, laughing at her lispings trials to call "papa," and tangling her golden tresses in your play. Can you forget all this? A mother's love sinks deeper and ever deeper in the

heart as it grows old. I have come to ask, on this old score, this captive's life for mine : for mine goes out unless by hasty action she is restored to me. The clammy hand of death even now lies hard upon my heart. It is dead, dead, dead. You surely will not refuse my boon.

King. It must occur to any wife, without a hint from her husband, that to the head alone belongs the final disposition of affairs. These matters are entirely without a woman's sphere and henceforth I put most urgent prohibition against all meddling.

Queen. The cause in which I speak must offer my excuse for any seeming lack of courtesy.

King. The cause in which you speak ! You speak in behalf of two lives that are condemned to death by all the rules of war, and yet, you seem to glory in their acts.

Queen. I know of nothing braver. He flung away all prudence and came to save his brother. All thought of self he cast aside. It is true that I admired his noble bearing and I would be ashamed if I had not. He bore himself so proudly, so haughtily defied your power. You, the captor, sat trembling there instead of taking up the challenge that he flung into your teeth.

King. The bold defiance of the devil seems to take possession of all about me, making them forget their treason in speaking for his purposes.

Queen. I wish for quiet in my grief. Any untimely reproaches may urge me on until I give my anger full vent.

King. There is something more than the love for a child in this. You seem intensely fond of this same

Prince. If it is proven that you love this madcap Prince I'll join your doom to his and place you in a grave together.

Queen. This ends all. There are no bounds to the insults that you heap on those about you. Perhaps I have given more cause for this than I intended. A wife's allegiance should be first to her husband and not her child. My angry passions carried me too far. I entreat your forgiveness and for the future you shall have no reason to complain. To assuage my grief I'll learn to love the more and seek by every act that is known to woman to sooth your cares, lighten your burdens, increase your joys and thus earn your full confidence again. Come, kiss me love. Put my sincerety to the proof: change the hour of execution to the morning and like a Spartan mother I will be there to see their end although with them my daughter dies, but by such means I hope to quiet all suspicion aroused against me.

King. I will make this change to test you, and I extend a cordial invitation to all to see the end of this.

Lady G. Not I. My soul is filled with grief enough.

King. Tut, tut. Love is not kindled quite so fast. Besides so small a spark is quickly quenched. In your next venture choose with more care and you have my promise to aid you with all my heart.

Lady G. Oh, that I had the easy conscience that keeps you company.

King. It is the happiness of a good digestion and an open heart. Come, my Queen, we must prepare for the morrow's work. *Exeunt all.*

ACT III. Scene 2. *Same day. Corridor and cell in the castle prison, at midnight. Queen and attendant moving through the corridor.*

Queen. Tread gently. Hide your light under the corner of your cloak. It is death if we are found. The third cell upon the right. Ah, here it is. Before we enter: tell me, are you prepared to finish this work at any cost? No torment yet devised could satisfy the half of his revenge if he should take us while we are engaged upon this task.

Attendant. Your majesty, I come prepared. Nobody has any interest in his schemes. Each of us feels that nobody is safe from the fury of his wrath if he makes the least mistake. The slightest thing brings upon our heads the most fearful punishments, he never ceases his angry cursing. Let us get to work. Everybody wishes for the chance to get away.

Queen. You have provided the cold chisel to cut his irons?

Att. I have it here and a hammer too.

Queen. Hark ! Did you not hear a footstep?

Att. It was the squeaking of a rat. There are lots of them in here.

Queen. The merest breath disturbs my overwrought nerves. I tremble at a shadow ; start at the rustle of my gown. This day has been filled with sorrow. May such another never dawn ! The strange perversity of fate ! To-day is the anniversary of my marriage and I thought to spend it joyfully. Come, unlock the door and let us get to work. *Attendant unlocks the*

door and both enter the cell. These dungeon walls are little to your liking?

Prince. Spare your taunts. Leave in peace the little measure of our life remaining. My mind is now transfixed with gloom. Leave us alone, I pray you.

Queen. You mistake me, my soul is far too sad to revel in a taunt.

Garner. What is your purpose here?

Queen. To-day, in words that froze my blood, I heard the Prince of Melbourne tell of orders that he left to hang my child. Since that time I have her constantly before my eyes, suspended, swaying in the breezes, a cold and stiffened corpse. I sought to save her but my hopes have been blasted by him on whom I should rely for consolation and for succor and so I turn to you.

Prince. He is your husband.

Queen. He was my husband. If by any act of self a wife may free herself from mate contemned, despised, disdained: then he no longer bears the right to the title you have bestowed upon him. It is only with abhorrence that I look upon him. To-night I leave him and I come to offer you your liberty, to accompany you and get my child again.

Prince. It was not liberty for myself I asked.

Queen. I have no choice. I offer it to either.

Garner. It must be for both. A mother trading for the child she loves puts all bounds to price aside.

Queen. I have not come to barter but to free my child and you can have whatever I can give.

Prince. Have you the key that unlocks these shackles?

Queen. He carries it himself bound around his waist, but I have brought a chisel and a hammer too.

Prince. Such tools will never cut these bars of iron within the limit of the time allotted for our stay on earth. We scarce could tell a dozen strokes before the howling pack would be upon us.

Queen. Do not despond so quickly. Have hope. Anticipation is often far worse than the reality. See ! here are the means at hand, at least to make an attempt. To see you die like the sheep in the shambles would gratify the ghoulish instincts lodged in him. We have more time for he has changed the hour of execution until morning. Come, come, we lose time, courage ! My daughter may yet be saved and you be free. Here are the tools. To work ! Despair of woman now drives on the man despondent. We have at least a chance.

Prince. If there be one chance in one thousand, yes, one chance in one million I would flay the skin from my hands with constant effort. When the skin is gone the flesh would follow, after the flesh the bone, until there should be left but what suffices to thrust a dagger in his breast or draw the trigger of a weapon aimed at him. Garner, I have wakened now to noble effort, we shall be free. But we cannot trust such tools as these for they would sound the alarm before we are fairly started. A fine toothed saw is what we need.

Queen. Hasten to the kitchen and bring us two saws. *Exit Attendant.* I will join in this work, it is worthy of a Queen.

Garner. It is the cause we struggle for as well as the labor done that must be weighed.

Prince. Let us get ready for this work. Sit upon the floor so that they may work with speed and have the advantage of free action and direct stroke.

Queen. Oh, why does he stay so long? Could anything have happened? Do you think he would betray us? The fever of impatience burns my brain until I cannot think. Why doesn't he come? What's that? Was that the King? No. No. It was a phantom of my brain. I fear that I shall lose my reason.

Garner. He will be here in but a moment. Calm yourself. We have much work to do and will need your strength.

Prince. How are we to leave the castle?

Queen. The front of this castle is deemed so strong that there he seldom stations many men. My kinsman guards that gate to-night and he will see that all the men are drunk or that their weapons are beyond their reach. Coming from the rear we are upon them before they have a chance to move. The gate will be unlocked. What sound is that? Is it the King? *Re-enter Attendant with saws.* At last! Here are the saws.

Prince. To work! This saw was never fashioned for work like this. Garner, it will hurt you cruelly to bear the pain of steady application. *Queen and Attendant saw.*

Garner. It is a biting thing but it will gnaw us free.

Prince. (*To Attendant.*) You are skilled beyond the Queen in the use of it. Go lend your skill to Garner; he came upon this ill-starred trip for me alone.

My conscience pricks me that I suffered him to thus tempt fate. *Garner groans.*

Prince. My God ! That stifled moan has drawn and quartered body, mind and soul. Garner ! Garner ! Bear it yet awhile. Afford me an opportunity to render back to you a partial payment for the suffering that you have borne for me. Haste good man ! Husband all your strength. Put your best skill in each strong stroke. The prize is worthy of your work. *Garner is released and faints.* Good Queen, sweet Queen, kind Queen, saw. I bid you saw the foot from my leg. On stumps I'll hobble to his chamber door to execute my vengeance.

Attendant. Let me finish it. In another minute you will be free.

Enter King.

King. Ha ! Ha ! Just in the nick of time. What ! dare you raise your hand against your King ? *Attendant and King both fire and the King kills the Attendant.* Your long account is settled now. Each of you vipers shall meet the fate you have so long deserved. My wife here too ! Whom can we trust when marriage vows have such slack hold to keep our wives within the bounds of decency ? You both shall die and all the world shall know your shame. *Queen rushes past him.* Ha ! Ha ! You suppose you have escaped me by this tardy flight ! I will punish her more at my leisure. You are the next to play your part. What do you think of it ?

Prince. My words can bear but a faint and faded meaning of what I would express : the loathing and contempt I feel are far beyond their power.

King. Why not sneer loose that chain and shackle? I would try it. Your cunning counts for naught it seems. You will die like a cur upon a bloody sheep. Why not resent such death? Measure your nerves against mine and calmly stand and watch me load this weapon with which I intend to kill you. See how carefully I measure out the grains. Not one of them shall feel the insult of losing its full part in this good work. Now take your ball, a good, round, smooth ball, with patching cut exactly to the size. *Prince reaches for the Attendant's pistol and ammunition pouch, pours some powder down the barrel, drops in an unpatched ball, gives it one hard rap to shake it down.* I have waked the tiger but you have started late. You shall not beat me. No. No. Not that. Hold your murderous hand. This is a Kingly quarrel, to be fought with weapons worthy persons of our rank. I'll have them brought. I surrender the castle and all my men, humbling myself to your stern will. Grant only that I may live. Life is so sweet. See! See! I throw my weapon down. You are bound in honor not to kill an unarmed foe. Upon my knees I beg you spare me. My wife! my child! Have pity, have mercy for my helpless family.

Prince. Pity! Mercy! An unarmed foe! When have you shown yourself worthy that name of foe? There are some beasts we shoot without a chance for life. *Fires. With one or two sharp blows of the hammer he breaks the shackles. Takes ammunition pouch and pistol.* Up! Garner! Up! They're all aroused. The guards will leave their posts and crowd to know the cause of all this noise. *Prince takes Garner in his arms. Exit, carrying Garner.*

Enter Soldiers.

Soldiers. What was that noise? Where was it?

Sec. Sol. There is the smell of smoke in this place.

Third Sol. What have we here? The King is dead!

Fourth Sol. Are you sure of that? Yes, it is true.
Come roll him out, he stinks.

First Sol. Go tell the Queen.

Fourth Sol. Here she comes.

Re-enter Queen.

Queen. The Prisoners? Where are the prisoners?

All. They have escaped.

Third Sol. Hasten! We may overtake them yet.

Queen. Go guard the exit to the rear, perhaps they may take that way out. I will arouse the castle.
Exeunt all.

ACT IV. Scene 1. *Beside a brook in the forest of Melbourn just before dawn of the following day. Bright moonlight.*

Prince. These forests echo with the welcome call of the winding horn which bids them cease pursuit. I'll find some grassy spot beside this crystal brook, wherein to lull to rest, fanned by gentle breezes, this bruised and weary body. Gently, mother earth, extend thy loving arms to take the care of the fairest, bravest, noblest youth I ever knew. Take care of him until I go to fetch some cool and sparkling water from the brook to bathe his waxen brow and coax the color back to his pale cheeks. *Goes for water and returning bathes Garner's brow.* There, there, so cool, so sweet, re-

freshing, charging your tired body with new life. Come, Garner ! Garner ! wilt thou not vouchsafe one single smile, one look, one little movement to bespeak the lingering spark of life ? Does not this draught, the purest gift our God has sent, refresh you ; stimulating your weak pulse to beat with its accustomed stroke and arrest hot fever's progress ? What ! Not yet returned to life ? I'm sickened with this dull and heavy load of fearful dread. Open these eyelids that curtain off from me those eyes of pure celestial blue, that hint of heaven, of life, of love, bringing thoughts and feelings as yet unnamed by us poor mortals.

Garner. Where am I ? What are we doing here.

Prince. The chill that hovered around is warmed by one sweet breath of heaven wafted down to earth. This gives me, impoverished beggar that I am, starved and thirsting, some small crumb of hope, one drop of cheer to moisten my tongue that it may assiduously court kind words to prompt you back to life. You little dream of what you have conferred on me by your resurrection. It was not an idle bond we sealed when first we clasped our hands and pledged our faith. The heart knew, and chose with feeling that was true before the mind had time to act. Then it was I learned the first responses to the prayer of love. Grant me leave to lisp and chatter forth my joy, as doting parents prattle to their infant heir. I wish to tell how all melody seems imprisoned in your voice ; the wood thrush note is turned to discord by the music of it. I wander in a maze of perfumed flowers, choosing the rarest of them all for you and when it sees the perfection of your grace this faded beauty sinks upon its wilted stem. The flood of your charms overwhelms

me and as I tell your graces over and over my mind's distraught with all the wealth that you have brought to me ; to pay that debt I'll live and strive, even as a brother for his brother, a mother for her child, even as a lover attempting to woo some token of regard from her he loves.

Garner. Hold me yet awhile in your strong arms, so. I seem to live upon the strength you furnish me. Forever could I lie thus, content ; watching life's stream go drifting by, too happy in my bliss to venture from the shore. I am so happy now ! Have I been here long, pray tell me what has happened ?

Prince. Your fetters were cut just as the Duke came in. You fainted before he came, and as he taunted me a glimmer of your fate flashed across my mind and as a tiger crunches living prey I, merciless, tore from him his soul, bespattered and besmeared with filth. I bore you limp and lifeless in my arms from those gaping jaws ; it seemed in vain, so long you lingered in death's shadow. I feared your life had sped and while I said "there's hope" my mind mistrusted what my wish affirmed. Then all the world seemed blank, the mocking birds in this bright light sent forth their warbling strains ; those notes broke discordantly upon my ear and lost to all sense of harmony re-echoed my sad thoughts. Those dreary thoughts, like busy hammers striking blow on blow, rent and wrenched my heart until it seemed that it must break beneath the strain. The world had nothing to compensate the loss. By dint of constant coaxing life at length came back to you. Beside myself with joy, so many happy thoughts went flitting through my mind I had not time to pluck, arrange, nor aptly place

the multitude of pictures fancy strew so thickly about. The picture once conceived I sought to fasten it with chain of words most polished, but ere it could be done another took its place and tempted thus the first's abandoned ; so I culled and culled in that vast store and then saved none except of you in life again.

Garner. Like hasheesh dreams your words instil a peace so deep, so solemn, grand, I would it might continue through eternity. Serenade me yet awhile with your sweet words.

Prince. This theme's a harp of many strings that could be touched with variations infinite to sound my joy and happiness. In that delirious joy I viewed again every pleasant scene I ever saw ; I seemed to wander on the seashore while the waves in wanton sport piled high their foaming crests, then you came beside me and are no sooner seen than each approaching, makes its graceful bow and falls, content to perish after seeing you.

Garner. Can such happy, happy times endure forever.

Prince. I am resolved to task my mind from hour to hour with schemes to please you and it must endure. There are many maids at court, the pick and choice of all belongs to you, the fairest, noblest, kindest, gentlest maid shall grace your nuptials. We shall be four together.

Garner. Do you thing to favor me in this? Do you think that there is anything that will fill the void and aching depth of absence? So kindly you have removed my dreams I scarcely know they're gone. By this I am to know that you will marry one of them ;

that even now some fair lady, in happiness, looks forward to the day when she shall call you husband?

Prince. There is a lady there that makes some claim to my hand, it was a promise made in early youth that I feel bound to keep.

Garner. We gaze at joys that others have with intense longing and wondering all the while why it has been so ordered : see others grasp the prize that lies so close our hearts and filch from us our dearest hopes without a question of their worth.

Prince. They shall not break one single strand of all that bind us. Come, come, you're turning green with jealousy, like the lover begrudging every bit of love bestowed on mother, brother, sister, father, friend, imagining that what is spent on them is wasted from his store, a total loss to him. Love is a flower, the more that it is plucked, the more there bloom in place of those we take.

Garner. You little know these wives if you think that they will tamely sit and see the affection spent that they themselves are hungering for.

Prince. Should my wife be such a shrew as you have thought, we will take ourselves into the tented field and there, amid the grinding crash of arms and strife, will share the joys and sorrows as they come. The law decreed "Survive the fittest," even love.

Garner. Then hope remains.

Prince. We have talked and gabbled like two old maids exchanging thoughts on how to raise a child or bachelors laying down the law to govern wives. There is more serious work for us to do before we move into these airy castles.

Garner. I have gathered strength to make the fight anew and fairly meet the brunt of fate. The fights that are unseen are often hardest won. Will you kindly lend your strength to my weak ankles? *Exit Prince and Garner.*

ACT IV. Scene 2. *The second day following. A small, dark room of the castle. Queen and several attendants.*

Attendant. Your highness, the body of the King lies waiting your final orders.

Queen. I am sinking deeper and deeper into the mire of despondency. All is lost, lost, lost, husband, the faithless fiends who bargained for my very soul and cheated me at the end. They have abandoned me and my child. Oh! my child! Everything seems lost.

Att. May it please your majesty, where shall we bury him?

Queen. In some secluded spot where the sight of the rounded mound will seldom meet my gaze to call to mind the awful horrors of yesterday. Those villains! oh, those villains! cheating me of what is priceless! Usury takes at most but part, but they have taken all and left not even vengeance for my share. Not vengeance for me? Did I say that they have taken vengeance from me? No doubt they are laughing, in sport and with mockery at how they have deceived the trusting Queen and thwarted her. Let them laugh! It is a cursed laugh and cursed shall be the laughers. Let me laugh too. Ha! Ha! Ha! My laugh is without the sound of mirth, an empty rattle like the grinning skeleton of mirth and quiet as pleasing. I stand like a chattering fool that offers prayer to the stinging

knout for mercy and helpless writhes beneath the blows of those he might have destroyed had he but borne before the half of what he now endures. This is the time for action, not for prayers. Dump the body of the King wherever you wish, then bring a hot brazier and branding irons and skewers. Bring me that hated boy, the Prince's brother, and bid him come to meet his brother, who awaits him here and longs to clasp him in his arms. Make this chamber dark and gloomy, lighted only by the flickering glare of one poor torch. Bring with you strong and lusty men ; grimy men that are more like devils than men. I want you to exercise your ingenuity to make it most dreadful. Hasten, obey my orders. I am going mad. Mag? Who calls Mag? Mag? Mag? That's my name. It's long, long years since last its welcome sound has reached my ears. *Re-enter Attendant with men.* Back fiends, back. Would you dare to enter here, to profane with your foul hands the sacred dead, the holy dead? Leave me alone with my dead child !

Att. Your majesty, here is the boy.

Queen. I forgot. Where am I? Have you told him what I bid you say?

Att. We have and he is more than pleased to think his brother has returned for him and grows impatient at delay.

Queen. Have these skewers hot, hissing hot, and as they pierce their burning way take note of how his flesh shall twitch! The stink and smell of burning flesh will seem like incense to my crazy nose. *Attendants prepare to bind the boy and he groans.* No shrieks, no groans, no tears. My heart is hardened and turned to stone by the acts of your perfidious brother for whom

you make atonement. Bind him fast. *Enter Prince and Soldiers.* Villain, villain. Seize this fiend who caused all this woe.

Prince. Back ! Back ! Every one of you. The castle is in my hands, my soldiers swarm about the halls and further strife is but a waste of life. I grant mercy to all of you.

Queen. Grant mercy to me whom you have so deeply wronged ! You are all cowards but watch a mother fight in behalf of her whom she loves. A sword, a sword. Stab, slay, kill, let not one live !

Prince. Close in and do not leave them room to act, this woman is for me. (*Queen rushes upon him with a sword.* Disarmed, before you make a second stroke. Hold her ! What do you mean by this relentless rage?

Queen. On bended knees I tugged and strained to cut your shackles, for which you promised to give me back my child. But no sooner are you free than you forget all sense of the obligations due to me and hasten to save yourself, unmindful that my child perished when you failed to revoke the orders for her hanging.

Prince. I remember the tale I told about her hanging, but rest satisfied for she is unharmed and free and in a moment will join you here. Put down your arms. Go bring the child. *Exit Soldier.* Whence comes this ill-favored crowd ? What does this brazier mean ? What have you there ? My God ! My brother ! Out of the way ! My dear boy ! Let not a single man leave this room. If they have injured a single hair of him they shall make full amends. Are you hurt ? These cords did not hold you so gently as your brother's arms. Come nestle in my lap as you have often done

before. It has been long indeed since last I saw your smiling face. Wipe your tears and show that face as happy as was your wont in former days. Have you forgotten those pleasant days when we have romped and played beneath the oaks?

Brother. Brother dear, it is so good to see you once again, to feel that I can romp and play without a fear. You will never leave me alone again?

Prince. You are not hurt!

Brother. I was more scared than hurt.

Prince. How slowly these days have dragged their weary courses since you were lost to me.

Queen. I am impatient for my child!

Prince. She will be here in but a moment. She was placed out of harm's way when we made the assault.

Queen. I can hardly wait a minute longer. You strained my nerves too much when you described the stern reprisal you would make for any harm that should befall your friend. The vivid picture of her dangling form that I had seen you draw led me to think that you could add some forms of torture unknown to the fiend himself.

Prince. I told the truth up to the very point where I stopped. These orders were issued as I have said, but others travelled after, revoking by their later date, those issued first. Our leave was very quickly taken and quite differently from the way we had arranged; thus it was I failed to give you warning that she was safe. We would have been an ingrate if we had maliciously left you in such a lurch. Make way, for here she comes.

Enter Attendant and Princess.

Queen. My daughter !

Child. Mother !

Queen. My life seems now without a care. I have learned the way to live ; the crooks and turns have disappeared and I look straight forward to our goal.

Prince. Henceforth you dwell at Murray Wood. I will provide ample accommodation for you there. If anything is lacking let me know, and I will seek at once to remedy it.

Queen. I start at once, and hope to bid a long farewell to all the suffering I have borne since coming here. In the future you shall have no better subject. My acts shall prove my loyalty. Adieu.

Exit Queen and Daughter.

Prince. Adieu ! and with my best wishes for a happy future. Now, comrades, let us take formal possession of our lands again. *Exeunt all.*

ACT V. Scene 1. *The following day. Room of the palace. Serving maid busily engaged in arranging wearing apparel. Enter First Page.*

First Page. Here are some more parcels for the lady.

Maid. More parcels ! here ! here ! Put them on this table. *First Page drops them.* You put them down as if you carried bricks.

First Page. Let me right the damage I have done. Can I help you in any way?

Maid. Do you think that you could press dresses smooth?

First Page. I'll press one very smooth, about the waist.

Maid. Sh! Sh! Her ladyship is within. Do not make your advances with so much noise.

First Page. But you will let me help you with your work?

Maid. If you insist, I have no way to stop you but you had better be engaged upon some other task. You have not strength enough to press these dresses smooth enough to suit the girls.

First Page. Indeed, then I shall try again.

Enter Garner.

Garner. Ah! I have caught you, have I? The crime consists, not in the loving, we all do that I hope, but in being caught in open protestation of the fact. As this is the first offense it should not be punished too severely.

Maid. It was not my fault, indeed it was not.

Garner. You think then that you ought to grow ashamed? There is no path that you can tread to lead you higher, provided that you love truly.

Maid. My lady, love comes to us in many forms and we must be careful to know if it is true or only masked. Perhaps your ladyship has felt that doubt. Men are such deceivers.

Garner. My love is far beyond the range of what I may attain. Within the deep recesses of my heart I buried it but its gentle glow warms all my life.

Enter Second Page.

Sec. Page. Is Garner here? The Prince is waiting for him.

Maid. I have a great curiosity to see that man, report speaks so well of him.

Sec. Page. Have you seen him here? I was directed to this chamber to look for him. They told me he was here.

Maid. This lady has this room. He would not dare intrude. *Exit First and Second Pages.*

Garner. I can delay this matter no longer. I wish that I had never ventured out in a garb so ill befitting a modest woman. I fear there is no hope for me because he knows the life that I have led. Those barriers have grown high and have become insuperable obstacles that I can neither force, nor pass by strategy. Although by birth we are so nearly equal, the knowledge of my acts would bring the blush of shame to him. He never would excuse my life in camp. He has requested my presence and I shall appear to-day arrayed in the very finest garments that I have. Make haste to bring the best, the very best I have.

Maid. My lady, to-day the rarest gowns I ever saw have poured so thick and fast I scarcely knew where they could be stored. Your ladyship has but to suggest and I can have at hand most anything becoming to a woman. See! this turquoise blue or this pink that may be compared to the inner part of shells. Here is the rarest shade of brown, a color that furnishes so many possibilities for the exercise of taste.

Garner. You pall me with this quantity and like a child that's seated at a feast I know not which to

choose the first. Take them all away. I will make my appearance before him in the habit of a youth.

Maid. Goodness gracious me! You could not think of shocking the court by doing such a thing.

Garner. Is it then so shocking for a girl to dress herself in clothes for men, provided that she keeps within the bounds prescribed by modesty?

Maid. That would not be within the bounds of modesty. Such an act is immodest and I should leave my place at once to seek another, should you attempt it, if my character had not receive a shock beyond repair.

Garner. Do people judge all things by mere appearances?

Maid. Would you ask of them to stop and think? They crowd so fast upon the heels of each other there is no time to stop.

Garner. Put them away again. I should be repulsed and scorned by him as some vile thing. I could never survive such ignomy. Yet he must know I did no evil act, no impure word has passed my lips, no action could suggest a thought of wrong. I will go in. Let me throw about my shoulders that dainty wrap that hangs beside my hat. Am I not fair? Can you observe a thing that could be changed for betterment?

Maid. Your ladyship is beautiful and everybody must admire you.

Garner. He cannot miss the thought, "What shall I do with her in this attire?"

Maid. The burden of your talk would seem to indicate that you misdoubt your power to make the port

for which you sail and if all ladies should shrink like this from the attempt there would be little conquest for our sex.

Garner. There are no new worlds for me to conquer. I simply seek to keep what I now have. I wage a defensive warfare and do not seek for the spoil of others love. Come, put on the final touches. I am resolved to make my appearance at this reception in seemly dress. Use all your art and skill to make me favorable.

Maid. You are dressed with simplicity but with true art. The dress you wear could not be better. I shall endeavor to emphasize the grace it half conceals.

Garner. This hat will never suit my dress.

Maid. It is perfection and becomes you well. But you will not need a hat.

Garner. Surely you could make this dress agree more with my peculiar style of beauty. I would not make my entrance there in any garb that showed the slightest flaw. Give me that other wrap; that soft, smooth fur will serve to take away all harshness that may strike his eye. What have we here? A letter!
Reads. "My Dear Borge:—You ask for favors far beyond my power to grant. I have so slight a hold upon my liberty I can scarcely call it mine. The neophyte in his cloistered cell has a wider range than I, so closely they watch me. The purpose that we had in mind has gone astray. Not only has he laughed at their strong bars but killed the Duke as well and changed what we designed for favor into grief. Those whom we thought to trap have turned sly and caught us in the net we spread for them. If you can escape

their toils, take instant flight to parts beyond the sea, go to your own home and when the rigor of restraint is somewhat lessened I will join you there to keep the promise that I made to you. Forgive me that the plans on which you staked so much have gone awry ; my disappointment was as keen as yours." How came this letter here ?

Maid. By a mistake these garments lay a little while in the room of Lady Catherine. I am a stranger to the turns and crooks you make on your way hither; turning to the left instead of right I missed my way and left them for a space of time with her.

Garner. It must be hers and yet the purport of this letter is foul treachery. It could not be hers, it must belong to some of her attendants. It is addressed "My Dear Borge." However it is certain that whoever penned these lines sent on before the message that discovered us to the Duke, knowing full well the consequences that she arranged. I will give this letter to the Prince and tell him how I came by it so he may guard himself from some foul plot that is now hatching in our midst. If I do that it will impute a charge of treason to the Lady Catherine, for she should know how it came to be placed in my wrap. It would augur ill for me to attempt the disgrace of her whom rumor says the Prince will soon proclaim his wife, nor would I help to destroy his dream of love although I might profit by it. With what grace could I present this letter to blast his hopes of happiness? It is so easy to tear down, so hard to build aright. But when he held me in his arms he did not seem to care for her.

Maid. Your ambition has a stronger wing than I thought.

L. of C.

Garner. Alas! it is only from a distance I may gaze; I have no right to come too close.

Maid. If there has ever been a lover who could look upon a picture such as this and turn away without regret he must be more or less than human.

Garner. Do you think that I am fair enough to awaken love in him? Good fortune is too frail to keep apace with my desires. It is ordered that we should wait beneath the tree of love until the ripened fruit shall fall. I could not, if I would, use any wile to make him break his promise. My courage is not equal to the task of playing in this double part. What shall I do? My fate is dashing on its wild career and yet I sit helpless nor dare to lift a hand to guide its course. A gambler with his gold upon the dice draws sympathy for the strain he labors under but we must be of stone, remain impassive while the throw is made. I own a baffled hope, a secret longing, the wish for something to surpass the miracle; a quick resentment against conditions I have no power to alter. I should like to leave all fears behind, be free to voice my thoughts. I tremble for fear that his rebuke may be made stronger by a cloak of charity.

Maid. Put on a bold front; us all the art of coquetry bequeathed our sex and you may easily lead him to your purpose.

Garner. He must come willingly, if at all. *Exit Garner.*

Re-enter First Page.

First Page. I have come to claim a kiss for my long wait.

Maid. But one?

ACT V. Scene 2, *Same day. Same room as that in which the King held his reception. Prince surrounded by his officers and lords and ladies in waiting upon the court.*

Prince. I hope to make rapid progress nor will it take long to reckon up my debts. To you I confide the charge of the regions to the north, to you the eastern provinces, to you the far off province of Anstead, reposing the utmost confidence in your fidelity. Why does not Garner come? It is strange he is not here. To him I owe the most.

Lady Cath. Why do you owe the most to Garner and why do you always take delight in telling it? You owe the most to me. I do not like him and I hope soon to cease to hear his praises. There is a promise you have long owed to me to place me in the light of your affianced bride. It seems to me that it would be better for you to take some thought of those whose wishes it is your duty to consult. You seem to hold your promise very lightly.

Prince. I will immediately make the announcement that you desire. *Rises. Enter Garner.* What is the meaning of this masquerade? You are playing tricks upon me.

Garner. There comes a time when all of us lose interest in the game of hide and seek and dare to show ourselves for what we are and so I come thus dressed for what I really am.

Lady C. It passes the bounds of all credulity to masquerade among the troops and then come here, presenting your bold face among these decent folk.

Prince. She came upon my invitation. Caught within the tangle of a hasty promise I stand at fault, not knowing what is best to do.

Garner. It is true I came upon your invitation and if it troubles you I shall not remain here long. None can say that I used a disguise for any purpose not honorable in the strictest meaning of all that term implies. You say you stand at fault and are caught within the tangle of a hasty promise. I release you freely from any promise you may have made to me and all I ask is that you justify my name against this slander.

Prince. You have taken my meaning very much amiss. I am far from wishing you to leave.

Enter Soldier bringing Borge.

Soldier. We bring, my lord, the Cavalier Borge in accordance with the instructions that you gave us.

Lady C. You had arisen, Prince, to make the announcement of our marriage vows.

Borge. The Prince exchanging marriage vows with Lady Catherine ! There is some mistake.

Prince. I hope to God there is ! I would give one-half my life to know the straight way out.

Lady C. I pray make haste. There is a certain sickening feeling that is growing upon me. Announce our marriage here so that I may go at once.

Prince. I have pledged my word and there seems to be no honorable way by which I may escape.

Borge. Permit me to say a few words. The hate I bear you is most intense but I have a greater one.

Lady C. I pray you do not listen to him, for in set speech he is such a master that he arranges words until they seem to have all meanings or have none.

Garner. What plea it is the Cavalier Borge will enter the Lady Catherine only seems to know.

Lady C. A strumpet from the camp dares question me!

Prince. Silence ! Do not dare to breathe another syllable against her name and pray remember Garner stands a little nearer to my heart than any other and while you may hold me strictly to observe my promise it does not carry with it the privilege to abuse her.

Lady C. A wife should have the welfare of her husband closest to her heart. An intense love will brook no opposition nor apportionment among others. Perhaps my zeal has carried me beyond discretion when it bade me acquaint you with a tale of how your journey came so soon to end, before it was fairly started. This is the reason why I asked that Borge should not be permitted to speak until I have finished. Borge advised the King that you were coming, the messenger was his trooper, you saw the man. He bore a packet from his lord, the Cavalier Borge. Borge hated you, you have heard him here admit it and in sullen anger awaited a chance to sate his vengeance until it gorged ; that chance at hand, he sent this message as I have said. You will ask me how I know all this and I will tell you that it came from a friend of him who bore this message. Knowing these things,

the wonder ceases that my tongue wagged fast. Borge will make no denial of this story for it is true. Your clemency is well known and upon such a happy occasion it would not be amiss to grant a pardon to your old ally, the Cavalier Borge. I ask this pardon for Borge because he furnished me the chance to prove my devotion to your cause. Borge, you are no longer a prisoner, you may depart.

Borge. An artist tells a lie so near the truth that deception can be marked in the detail only and by the closest scrutiny. The tale you heard is far too true and false as that woman there.

Lady C. I asked a pardon for Borge in Christian charity and extended him mercy that it seems is quite undeserved. I now repent it and ask that he be led to instant execution ; for the honor of your wife. Away with him! We dare not trust such men ; they turn upon the very ones to whom they owe the most. Away with him!

Prince. Stop! I will hear the statement Borge desires to make.

Lady C. He has plagued me with his offers and now he seeks revenge. You would not cheapen me by such an exhibition.

Garner. Borge can doubtless furnish us some very interesting facts ; we hear too many reasons why he should not speak.

Borge. I planned your death and this is how it came about. The Lady Catherine whispered words of love to me that set my soul on fire, she then suggested that we clear our path of all obstructions that lay within it,

naming you. She said that she refused your offer and that she feared your anger. My information of your journey came from her alone, your confidant, and by my hand passed on to the Duke.

Lady C. This is false. Every word is absolutely false.

Prince. What proofs have you ?

Borge. I have no proofs. I destroyed the letter giving me the time of your departure.

Lady C. You see!

Prince. It seems to be the word of one against the other's. Garner, what do you think of this ?

Garner. This letter may complete the chain of proof. By the merest accident it fell into my hands and I have been much troubled to decide upon the course I should pursue. *Hands Prince the letter and he reads.*

Prince. You are my guardian angel, a load is lifted from my mind, I fully understand.

Lady C. This letter bears a signature no doubt ?

Garner. What prompts the Lady Catherine to that thought unless she knows it is not signed ?

Prince. There is no signature but I remember well this handwriting. Oh faithless woman, thus to tempt a man to build his hopes on such a slender bough, a bough so hanging o'er the brink the slightest wind must send the home into the foaming tide ; and such a bough, that has furnished homes for all the worms that breed ; its heart is eaten up and it is rotten to the core.

Lady C. Cold ambition is often rash and presses on when we wish to stop. There never was a time since first I took this devious path I would not willingly have turned my steps to solid ground. I curse the God and fate that held me fast!

Prince. Hush! Man creates his own attending angels here; waits not for heaven nor hell. Our acts are ruled by law and you must suffer now the inevitable consequences of yours. You are banished to the Province of Anstead. Go! *Exit Lady Catherine.*

Prince. Borge, return again to your own country and never be caught here again on pain of the strictest penalties. See him beyond our lines. *Exit Officer and Borge.* Now my little lady let me reaffirm all I told you in the wood and add something more, for then I little thought but that you were what I mistook you for.

Garner. Those woodsong notes still linger in my ear like chimes of distant silver bells; a heritage of love I will always carry with me.

Prince. Lords and ladies, your future queen.

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